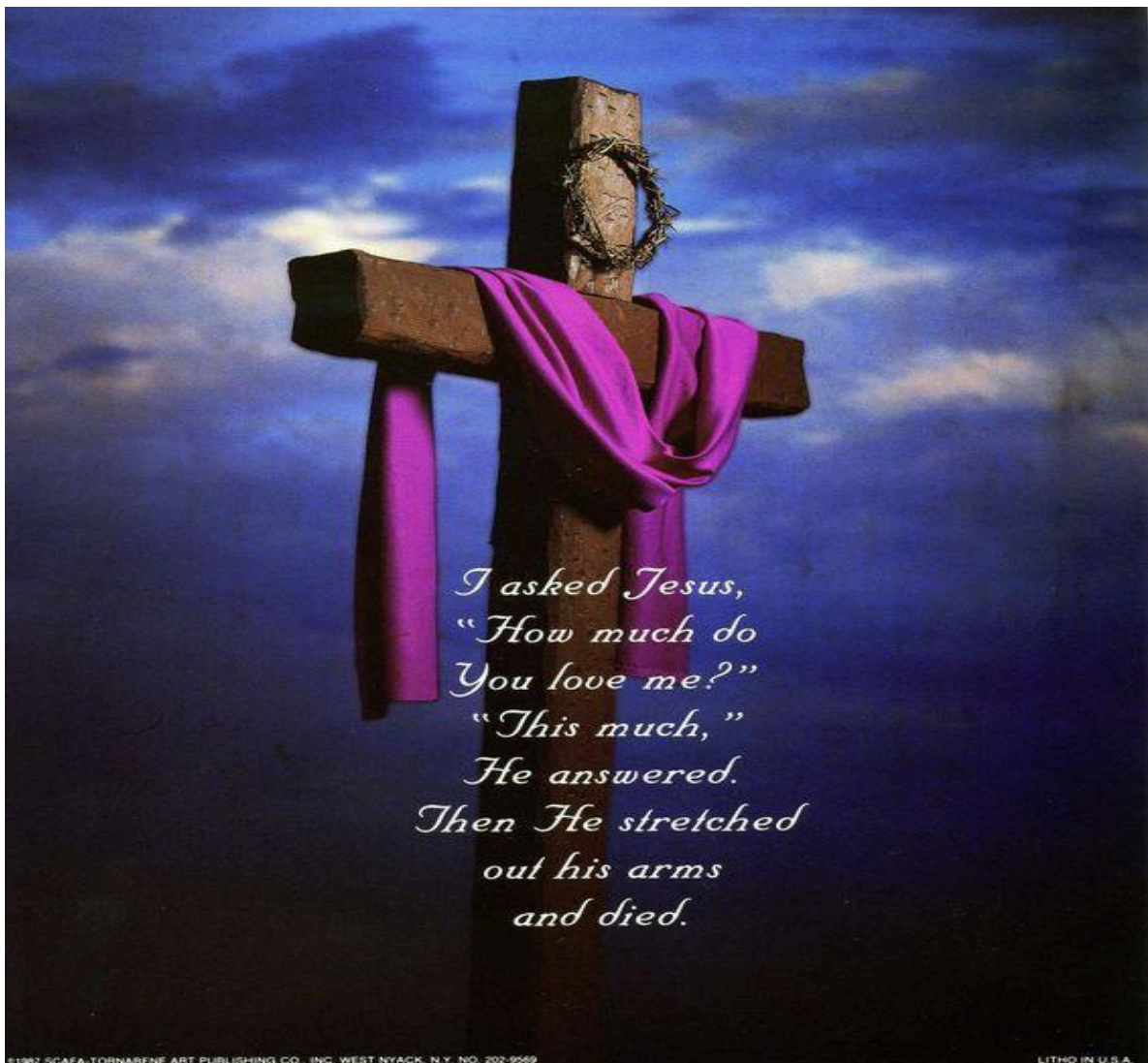


**AN ECUMENICAL GATHERING**  
**at ST MARY'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH, NEWPORT**

**7pm FRIDAY 29 MARCH**

**SEVEN WORDS FROM THE CROSS  
FOR GOOD FRIDAY**



## WE REFLECT ON JESUS' LAST WORDS.

*Traditionally, on Good Friday, the church is stripped of decoration, and the crosses are covered.*

Opening: God so loved the world

### 1. *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they are doing*

Before you die, Jesus Christ, and the world goes into deep darkness, take our lives, from our souls, from our consciences, all that has offended you, all that has hurt others, and the obstinacy which has made us numb to the plight of those whom we could help or heal.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world

**Have mercy upon us**

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world

**Have mercy on us.**

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world

**Grant us your peace**

On this day, at this time, irrespective of our faith or lack of it, we accept deeply in our hearts the only words that can set us free;

Your sins are forgiven, Your sins are forgiven. **Amen**

### **Hymn:**

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?

Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?

Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble

Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?

Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?

Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?  
Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble  
Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?

## *2 Today you will be with me in paradise*

Lord Jesus, remember us when you come into your kingdom  
Remember us, not for our impressive CV. nor the things we hope will  
appear in our obituaries  
Remember us not for the virtues we occasionally display or for any  
credit we think we have in our oral account. Remember us, as one of  
the criminal community who hung at your side, and if life will not let us  
be in paradise with you today, keep a place for us.

**Amen**

**Taize:** Jesus, remember me, when you come into your kingdom  
Jesus, remember me, when you come into your kingdom

## *3 Mother, there is your son.....*

For our families, where they are open, loving, supportive, that their joy  
might be kept safe,  
Lord hear us,  
**Lord graciously hear us**

For our families, where they are tense, troubled, fragmented, that they  
may find a way through the pain,  
not a path away from it,  
Lord hear us.

**Lord, graciously hear us**

For our churches, where they have become introverted, suspicious of  
the stranger, obsessed with dead rather than living stones, suffocated  
by correctness and tradition, that they might be redeemed from the  
pawnshop of past glory and renewed by the power of the Holy Spirit

Lord, hear us.

**Lord, graciously hear us**

For ourselves, in this place of worship surrounded by people whose journey we have not travelled, whose depth of faith we do not know, whose potentials we cannot imagine, that we might somehow know we belong to each other  
Lord, hear us.

**Lord, graciously hear us**

And before you leave the cross and we vacate this building, if there is one of our family for whom we should care more fondly, direct our gaze to them, as you turned Mary towards John.

**Amen**

**Hymn:**

Mary, blessed grieving mother, waiting by the cross of shame through your patient, prayerful vigil, kindle hope's eternal flame crying in the pains of earth, singing of redemption's birth.

Holy mother watching, waiting, for the saving of the earth in the loneliness of dying, speak of hope and human worth there for all the world to see, lifted up at Calvary!

#### ***4. My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?***

Lord Jesus

By your cry of desperate honesty, rid us of superficial faith which is afraid of the dark.

Not so that we might be justified pessimists, but so that we might discover profound joy.

Give us, when we need it, the courage to doubt, to rage, to question, to rail against heaven until we know that we are heard.

We do not ask for easy answers to hard times; there are many who can offer these.

We ask for a sense of your solidarity, that will be enough to let us know that we do not walk or cry alone;

That will enable us to go through the dark and find light again in the morning. **Amen**

**Hymn:**

O sacred head, surrounded by crown of piercing thorn  
O bleeding head, so wounded, so shamed and put to scorn!  
Death's pallid hue comes o'er thee, the glow of life decays  
yet angel hosts adore thee, and tremble as they gaze.

Thy comeliness and vigour is withered up and gone  
and in thy wasted figure I see death drawing on  
O agony and dying! O love to sinners free!  
Jesu, all grace supplying, turn thou thy face on me.

## 5. I am thirsty

You have made us for yourself. We know it, even if we cannot name it. We have had these bodies and these minds long enough to learn to live with our limitations

Yet, despite this, something hankers, yearns, thirsts for something better, which we know is there.

Beautiful music ends and we wish it could continue. We embrace, then refrain from embracing and wish that we could be held forever. We think deeply, or feel deeply and wish that this sense of being caught up in living would not be interrupted by the mundane things of life.

We sense the disappointment in dashed hopes that deserve to be fulfilled, in missed opportunities which should have led to joy not frustration; in people whose potential has been buried or denied and deserves to flourish.

So much of life demands a resolution, so thank you for this incompleteness. Thank you for this yearning, thank you for this thirst, thank you for giving us enough of you to want more, and to sense the fullness of eternity with the limits of time.

**Hymn:**

Glory be to Jesus, who, in bitter pains, poured for me the life blood from his sacred veins.

Grace and life eternal in that blood I find; blest be his compassion infinitely kind.

Blest through endless ages be the precious stream, which from endless torments did the world redeem.

## **6. It is finished**

Now Lord Jesus, you can let go of us. You have convinced us of our sin and you have forgiven it. You have convinced us of your way and have engaged us on it. You have shown us a foretaste of heaven and have made us a part of it. You can let go of us now.

Having overcome the sin of the world, death will be a small obstacle, just as you foretold that you would be handed over to be crucified. And this has come true; also you foretold that on the third day you will rise again and we will be your witnesses. **Amen**

### **Hymn:**

It is a thing most wonderful, almost too wonderful to be,  
that God's own son should come from heaven, and die to save a child  
like me

And yet I know that it is true, he chose a poor and humble lot  
and wept and toiled and mourned and died for love of those who loved  
him not.

## **7. Father, into your hands I commit my Spirit**

God, who before your birth, called you into being, now calls you back,  
his accent still the same. Lord Jesus, we will let you go. You cannot

cling to life forever, nor can we cling to a dying frame, nor do we grudge you that peace which passes all understanding which you have promised to us. Go to heaven, where you will welcome those who die in your faith; whose death, with your death, we remember. Tell them that we love them. That we miss them. Even if we need to forgive them, that they are not forgotten. And cheered by the prospect of a day when there will be no more death or parting, and all shall be weak, and all shall be one. May they who have died before us be among the first to welcome us to heaven, where, with you enthroned in glory, and in the company of the Blessed Virgin Mary and all the saints, keep us in faith, fill us with hope, deepen us through love, to the glory of your holy name

**Amen**

Silence

Closing music

*Please leave the church in silence.*

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